

OLD SPANISH TRAIL CONSTRUCTION REPORT

(Memo. The Old Spanish Trail, for administration purposes, is divided into three departments, Eastern, Texas and Western. Mileage calculations will vary until bridges and new roads are more nearly completed. These computations in several places give mileages when completed. The three departments, Main Line, read: Eastern, 970 miles; Texas, 948 miles; Western, 912 miles—Total, 2830 miles.)

Eastern Department—970 Miles

Checked Up with the Highway Departments,
September, 1923

The Eastern Department includes Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana; this is the section paralleling the Gulf of Mexico. The Highway Departments are wisely seeking first to bridge the great waterways, drainage basins and the other physical barriers of the gulf country. In mileage, these barriers represent a small percentage of the distance, but in engineering cost and skill they are dominating problems. These compilations show the remarkable progress being achieved in the East.

Florida, 455 ms.

St. Augustine to Lake City, 101 ms. paved.

Four great bridges in West Florida.

- 1: Apalachicola River, 5,500 ft., river structure completed and open, western approach 3,300 ft. under construction. Cost \$800,000.
- 2: Choctawhatchee River, 8,000 ft., under construction, 60% complete. Estimated cost \$370,976.
- 3: Black Water River, completed. Foundations 73 ft. deep. Cost \$170,000.
- 4: Escambia Bay, near Pensacola, 2.3 ms. wide, advertising for bids. Estimated cost \$750,000.

Florida is now in ample funds. The Old Spanish Trail is Highway No. 1 on the state program and its prompt completion is ordered. Concrete, gravel and sand-clay roads, minor bridges and other permanent construction are proceeding in various sections. Survey of all sections now in progress.

West Florida is high, rolling country and the gulf coast very attractive.

A concrete 18-ft. road is building from Pensacola to the Alabama state line, 19 ms. From Pensacola to New Orleans is the Gulf Boulevard section of the OST. Pensacola is building a concrete boulevard to her Gulf Beach and preparing to open a great bathing, fishing and resort section.

Alabama, 70 ms., including Mobile Bay. Part of Gulf Boulevard section.

Mobile Bay involves a bridge 9 ms. long. The Highway Department has voted ten to two to build this bridge. Because of its engineering and financial magnitude this construction is not yet started. Surveys are being made. Work has been ordered on the section of road adjoining the state of Mississippi. Alabama road work is backward. A Tourist Loop down the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, thence to Pensacola, is now being urged.

Mississippi, 88 ms., when completed.

Three counties across Mississippi, financed for paved construction. Final costs will reach nearly \$4,000,000. Part of the Gulf Boulevard section of the OST.

Jackson County, cut-over pineland country, includes Moss Point, Pascagoula and Ocean Springs. 18-ft. concrete highway building at average cost of \$38,000 per mile. Last project, \$414,355, let July 30, 1923.

Biloxi Bay, one mile wide, between Harrison and Jackson counties, to be bridged. Federal, state and local authorities proceeding now with plans.

Harrison County includes Biloxi, Gulfport and Pass Christian. The highway is along the Gulf beach, and is now being surfaced in concrete and asphalt. Seawalls and beach protection also being constructed. A beach front of great interest being developed.

The Bay of St. Louis, 2 ms. wide, good ferry. Bridge question awaiting completion of the roads.

Hancock County, includes the town of Bay St. Louis and cut-over pineland. Financed for 18-ft. gravel road.

Pearl River, dividing line of Mississippi and Louisiana. Bridge financed and up to the engineers.

Louisiana, 357 ms., when completed.

From Mississippi state line westward across Honey Island and through the swamp, 5.2 ms., to Pearl River Station, construction in progress, 10% complete; bad swamp conditions. From Pearl River Station and through Slidell, 5.9 ms., federal standard gravel road completed. Construction over 5.1 ms. lowlands to Lake Pontchartrain, 25% complete.

Across lowlands east end of Lake Pontchartrain, 9.4 ms., dredging partially completed, grade settling and seasoning. A travelable road promised within a year. Short ferries will then carry the traffic over the lake outlets, the Rigolets and the Chef Menteur. Water 70 to 90 ft. deep.

Chef Menteur to New Orleans, 22.7 ms. of gravel road.

New Orleans to Morgan City, ancient delta lands of the Mississippi River, 112 ms., numerous construction works in progress. Difficult road building country. Rich, black lands and numerous bayous. New federal standard roads will be completed in a year, and the distance shortened to 105.2 ms.

Morgan City to Lake Charles, 157.7 ms., good gravel road.